

Dr. Praitis

English 509T: Poetry

In our speed-focused, utilitarian, materialist culture, poetry (a use of language that requires slowing down, taking note, and opening up) doesn't often take center stage. Still, at the most important moments of our lives, at births, deaths, marriages, moments of heartache, and celebrations of change, poetry is what we turn toward. At these intense moments in our lives, we seek language that extends beyond the use of everyday words into a realm that captures emotions and offers profound insight. In this course, we'll work and strive to write and express in language, as best as we possibly can, what we are thinking and feeling.

Dr. Blaine

English 525T: Tragedy

When something really awful happens today—often something out of the blue, like a fatal accident—we often hear people say that it was a senseless tragedy. In literary terms, however, tragedy is more often correlated with a meaningful, not senseless, series of actions—i.e., a plot. Aristotle, at least, defined it that way. Other theorists have tried their hands at making sense of tragedy, as well. We will continue this line of inquiry ourselves, pursuing several agendas as we do so. Most simply, we will engage in a historical survey of this foundational term in the Western literary tradition, beginning with plays by the ancient Greek playwrights along with theoretical statements by Plato and Aristotle and continuing up to more recent times. Our historical survey will complement another goal in the course: to test the viability of the concept of tragedy in regard to more recent drama. How might postmodern plays such as Sarah Kane's *Blasted* or Suzan-Lori Parks' *Topdog/Underdog* be understood in the context of tragic theory and practice, and how might they complicate or nuance the terms of the debate on what tragedy is all about? We will also consider to what extent the term tragedy is applicable to works produced in non-Western cultures. It has been maintained, for instance, that tragedy does not exist in traditional Asian drama. We will test out such a claim by reading such plays as the Sanskrit drama *The Shattered Thighs*, the nō play *Matsukaze*, or the kabuki drama *Chūshingura* to see how themes and characters similar to those found in Western tragedies are represented. As a unifying approach to these various agendas, we will ask what comparative analysis of plays from vastly different times and places can tell us about the works themselves and the categories that we use to understand them.

Dr. Hollis

English 571T: Virginia Woolf and Mina Loy

In the early twentieth century, both Woolf and Loy strongly situated themselves against the conventions of the time. Whether it was Woolf writing about the positive experiences of illness or Loy crafting the first poem about childbirth from the perspective of someone who had experienced it, the two were constantly reimagining the world and questioning more conventional understanding of experience. This course pairs Woolf and Loy together to demonstrate how they are in conversation with one another. Though they were not close to each other, their work bears striking similarities that show how they both, individually, were responding to the events of the day. Each class day, Woolf's works will be framed by Loy's in that we will begin and end with a poem by Loy which will bookend a work by Woolf. The course will have weekly journals, a creative project, and a seminar paper.

Dr. Kelman

English 574T: Approaches to World Literature: “Dead Letter Office, or World Literature in the Age of the Post”

Already in 1827, Goethe foresaw the coming of something he called “Weltliteratur” or “World Literature,” warning that “the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.” Goethe especially emphasized what he saw as the increased communication between literary authors, focusing in this way on a “world” constituted by long-distance communication networks. Following Goethe, this seminar will focus on the problems and possibilities of world literature in its relation to the nascent and flourishing communication networks that make up globalization. We will focus especially on literary works from around the world that highlight postal networks (including material letters, but also other forms of long-distance communication), emphasizing not only successful communication but also, and perhaps more importantly, the interruption of these communication networks. In effect, we will read these literary texts as seismographs that will help us attend to the birth pangs and death throes of globalization from the early 19th century to the present. As we address the issues of communication and its interruptions, we will develop related themes, such as the “dead letter office,” secrecy, anarchism, political violence, conspiracies, surveillance, border crossings, and the archive. At the same time, this course will provide an introduction to some of the theoretical debates that have taken place over the last twenty years concerning the possibilities and problems of studying world literature both within the university and outside of it (at secondary schools, but also within various non-institutional frameworks). Class material includes narrative fiction (novels, short stories), critical essays, literary theory, and perhaps a song or two. Possible primary texts include: Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener,” Victor’s *The Dead Letter*, Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*, short stories by Kafka, Lu Xun, and Borges, Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49*, Velvet Underground’s “The Gift,” Murakami’s *The Wild Sheep Chase*, Piglia’s *The Way Out*, and Luiselli’s *Lost Children Archive*. All texts are in English or English translation.

Dr. Sandner

English 579T: Critical Approaches to Popular Literature

The class will study matters of influence and textual scholarship in order to perform practical critical work at the intersection of the digital humanities, archival scholarship, popular literature, and critical theory. The class will work on two projects: expanding and curating an online archive that studies the literary influence of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* over the past two hundred years; and organizing an exhibition out of the rich sf holdings in the Pollak Library’s Special Collections on the history of sf zines.

Dr. Brannon

English 590: Writing Theory and Practice

This course will prepare you to teach freshman composition at CSUF as a TA. In it, you'll learn composition theory, techniques, and gain familiarity with the English 101 curriculum that you will teach. Coursework will include a mixture of practical application and theoretical grounding. Students must pass with a B and be recommended to move into a TA-ship at the completion of the course.